

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 338 003

EC 300 745

AUTHOR Ensign, Arselia, Ed.  
TITLE Is Your Church Accessible? Houses of Worship:  
Physical Accessibility Checklist.  
INSTITUTION PAM Assistance Centre, Lansing, MI.  
PUB DATE Jul 91  
NOTE 9p.; Checklist provided by the Lutheran Church of  
America, Division of Parish Services.  
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)  
JOURNAL CIT PAM Repeater; n70 Jul 1991

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Accessibility (for Disabled); \*Building Design;  
\*Churches; \*Physical Disabilities; Program  
Development

## ABSTRACT

This checklist is intended to help churches evaluate the accessibility of their facilities to those with physical disabilities. Categories covered are: basic accessibility, parking lots, walks, ramps, entrances/exits, doors and doorways, stairs and steps, floors, worship space, rest rooms, controls, water fountains, identification, warning signals, hazards, public telephones, and elevators. An accessibility process is detailed for the three major steps of: (1) audit (e.g., identify the needs); (2) design (e.g., develop a scope of the work and prioritize needs); and (3) implementation (e.g., finalize financial planning, implement, and dedicate the resulting church and program. (DB)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

# PAM REPEATER

## HOUSES OF WORSHIP Physical Accessibility Checklist



No. 70

July, 1991  
Arselia Ensign, Editor

PUBLISHED AT:  
PAM Assistance Centre  
601 West Maple Street  
Lansing, MI 48906  
517-371-5897 or  
1-800-274-7426  
Voice or TDD  
FAX 517-371-5898

### IS YOUR CHURCH ACCESSIBLE?



ACCESSIBLE?

--Catholic Update July 1986

*It is truly a joy to discover that many denominations are taking an active interest in making their houses of worship more accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessibility is much more than physical access and accommodation, the topic we are addressing here. Of equal importance is the open heart and mind, the willingness to adapt or relocate church activities and resources. But first, one must enter!*

*As your REPEATER Editor addresses this topic for the first time, I wish to acknowledge some fine sources of materials, among which are the Episcopal Resource Packet on Disabilities, the Health and Welfare Ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, The National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities, The AFB News (July, 1989) concerning Synagogues, the Mennonite Board of Missions, and the Lutheran Church of America, Division of Parish Services.*

*It is from the latter source that we chose the following Church Access Checklist for review by the Michigan Center for a Barrier Free Environment. It was our wish to provide our readers with a checklist which conformed with State of Michigan, Department of Labor, guidelines. The Lutheran Church Checklist, provided here, has therefore been reviewed and certain requirements modified for churches in this state.*

*Arselia Ensign*

### CHURCH ACCESS CHECKLIST

Can someone who is physically limited get into your church building and participate in worship and other congregational activities? Below is a list of questions that will help identify the architectural barriers that are present in your building. The questions marked with asterisks (\*) identify the access requirements that are of greatest importance in making your building essentially accessible.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

*Arselia S. Ensign*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

2

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

**A. Basic Accessibility****Yes No**

- \* 1. Is it possible to get from a parked car to any area in the building without going up or down a step or steps? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Parking Lots****Yes No**

- \* 1. Are accessible spaces close to the building? \_\_\_\_\_
- a) Is there a minimum of two spaces always available? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Are they identified as reserved for use by individuals with physical disabilities? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Are the parking spaces at least 8' wide with an access aisle at least 5' wide? The access aisle can be between the parking spaces. \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Is the access aisle paved, even if the rest of the parking lot is not paved? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Walks****Yes No**

1. Do walks have nonslip, paved surfaces? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are walks at least 60" wide? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 3. Is the slope of walks not greater than 5 %? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 4. Are walks of a continuing common surface, and not interrupted by steps? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Whenever they cross other walks, driveways or parking lots, do walks blend to a common level? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 6. Do walks have a level platform at the top which is  
(a) 6' x 5' if a door swings out onto the platform or toward the walk, or  
(b) 3' x 5' if door doesn't swing onto the platform? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 7. Does the platform extend at least 3' beyond latch-sides of the doorway? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Ramps****Yes No**

- \* 1. Do ramps have a slope no greater than 1 foot rise in 12 feet and a width of no less than 60" on exterior? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 2. Do ramps have handrails on both sides? \_\_\_\_\_
- a) Are handrails 34"-38" above the surface of the ramp? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Are handrail surfaces smooth? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Do handrails extend 1 foot beyond the top and bottom of the ramp? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do ramps have a surface that is nonslip? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do ramps have at least 5 feet of straight clearance at the top and 72" at the bottom? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do ramps have level platforms at 30 foot intervals and whenever they turn for purposes of rest and safety? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Entrance/Exits****Yes No**

- \* 1. Is at least one primary entrance to each building usable by individuals in wheelchairs? (It is preferable that all or most entrances (and exits) should be accessible to, and usable by, individuals in wheelchairs or persons who are otherwise disabled.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Doors and Doorways****Yes No**

- \* 1. Do doors have a clear opening of 32" or more?  
 a) Are they operable by a single effort? Note: Double doors are not usable by those with disabilities unless they operate by single effort, or unless one of the two doors meets the 32" width.  
 2. Are the doors operable with pressure (30 lbs. or less) which could reasonably be expected from disabled persons?  
 \* 3. Is the floor on the inside and outside of each doorway level for a distance of 5 feet from the door in the direction the door swings?  
 \* 4. Are sharp inclines and abrupt changes in level avoided at doorsills? (1/2" for interior doors, 3/4" for exterior doors.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**G. Stairs and Steps****Yes No**

1. Do steps avoid abrupt nosing?  
 2. Do stairs have handrails both sides 34" to 36" high as measured from the tread at the face of the riser?  
 a) Is there at least one handrail that extends beyond the top and bottom wall?  
 b) Is the handrail at least 1 1/2" from the wall?  
 3. Do steps have risers 7" or less?  
 4. Are uneven or slippery surfaces avoided on the step treads?  
 5. Are open stairs provided with a means of warning unsighted persons of their existence, such as slightly raised abrasive strips at the approach?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**H. Floors****Yes No**

1. Do floors have a nonslip surface?  
 \* 2. Are floors on each story at a common level or connected by a ramp?  
 3. Where carpeting is used, is it a tight weave and low pile, preferably without padding?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Worship Space****Yes No**

- \* 1. Can people participate fully in worship? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- a) Can people hear? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Is there adequate amplification of sound? e.g., induction loop systems and miniature broadcasting systems which can be adapted to existing sound systems? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Can people see? Is there adequate lighting to enable participation in worship? Locate light sources so there are no shadows on speakers or interpreters. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Is space provided for wheelchairs (minimum of two spaces)? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Do at least two or more spaces have extra leg room for handicapped persons with crutches, walkers, braces or casts? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Can people receive the sacrament of the altar with others without climbing steps? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**J. Rest Rooms****Yes No**

- \* 1. Is there at least one accessible toilet room provided on each floor? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 2. Do entrance vestibules, doors and vision screens allow sufficient clearance for wheelchair passage? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Is the floor of the restroom of a nonslip surface and the same level as the corridor floor outside? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 4. Do toilet rooms have turning space 5 feet by 5 feet to allow traffic of individuals in wheelchairs? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 5. Is there at least one toilet stall that : \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) is at least 36" wide (42" preferred)? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) has a 48" clear depth from door closing to front of commode to allow a wheelchair in the stall? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) has a door that is 36" wide and swings out? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) has grab bars on each side, which meet specifications, fastened securely to the wall at the ends and center? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) has commode with seat 19" from the floor? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Do toilet rooms have sinks that are wall-mounted to provide 29" clearance from floor to bottom of the fixture? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Do sinks have easy-operating faucets (not self-closing)? (Single-lever type handles not requiring hand grip are preferred.) \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Are drain pipes and hot water pipes covered or insulated? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Are some mirrors and shelves at a height as low as possible with the bottom no higher than 40" above the floor? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Do toilet rooms have towel racks, towel dispensers, other dispensers and disposal units mounted no higher than 38" from the floor? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Do toilet rooms for men have wall-mounted urinals with the opening of the basin 17" from the floor, or have floor-mounted urinals that are level with the main floor of the toilet room? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### K. Controls

Yes No

1. Are switches and controls for light, heat, ventilation, windows, draperies, fire alarms, and all similar controls of frequent or essential use, placed no higher than 48" from floor? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### L. Water Fountains

Yes No

- \* 1. Is there at least one water fountain usable by physically handicapped persons provided at an accessible location on each floor? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do water fountains or coolers have upfront spouts and controls? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are they hand-operated (without the need for grasping, pinching or twisting) or hand and foot operated? \_\_\_\_\_
4. If coolers are wall-mounted, are they hand-operated, with basin 34" from the floor? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* a) If over 36" from floor is there a cup dispenser next to the unit? \_\_\_\_\_
5. If there are floor-mounted fountains, are spouts no higher than 30"? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### M. Identification

Yes No

1. Are raised (or recessed) letters or numbers used to identify rooms or offices? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is identification placed on the wall, on the handle side of the door? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are doors not intended for normal use, that might prove dangerous if a blind person were to exit or enter by them, made quickly identifiable to the touch by knurling the door handle or knob? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### N. Warning Signals

Yes No

1. Are audible warning signals accompanied by simultaneous visual signals for the benefit of those with hearing or sight disabilities? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### O. Hazards

Yes No

1. Are door closers sufficiently out of the way to avoid injury and accidents? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are signs, ceiling lights, fixtures or similar objects protruding into regular corridors or traffic ways at least 7 feet above the floor? \_\_\_\_\_



3. Is lighting on ramps adequate? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are exit signs easily identifiable to all disabled persons? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### P. Public Telephones

Yes No

- \* 1. Is there easy access to a telephone? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Is there an appropriate number of public telephones accessible to physically handicapped persons? (Standard telephone boots are not accessible.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Is height of dial (side approach) 54" or less from floor, 48" at the front? (Push-button dialing preferred.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Is coin slot located 54" or less from the floor? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Are there telephones equipped with an amplifier for persons with hearing disabilities? \_\_\_\_\_
- a) are they identified as such? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Q. Elevators

Yes No

- \* 1. If your church is multistory, does it have an elevator? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Are elevators usable by the physically handicapped provided? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Are elevators located close to an accessible building entry? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Are all of the controls 54" or less from floor? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Are the buttons labeled with raised (or indented) letters beside them? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Is there a handrail provided on at least one side 32" from floor? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 7. Is the cab at least 68" x 55"? \_\_\_\_\_
- \* 8. Does the door have a clear opening at least 36" wide? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Is an emergency telephone located low enough for children and the handicapped (48" maximum height)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Is the elevator self-leveling (1/2" maximum), slow-closing with sensing devices? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Church Access Check List

Reviewed by

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Church

\_\_\_\_\_

Date(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We gratefully acknowledge the fact that all production costs of this special issue of the PAM REPEATER have been provided by the Rotary Club of Lansing and Dart National Bank.

## LOVE FINDS A WAY

--Al Bonsignore  
The Christian Overcomers, Inc.



## ACCESSIBILITY PROCESS

### Step 1 AUDIT

- a. Initiate an "Audit for Accessibility" of your church.
- b. Develop a statement of need.
- c. Present the needs to the Church Board.
- d. Recommend the formation of an Access Audit Team to study the feasibility of remodeling to make the church accessible.
- e. Suggest the formation of a Attitudinal/Programmatic Team to look at the programmatic considerations and attitudinal barriers which exist in the congregation.
- f. Inform the congregation of the objectives of the Access Audit Team and Additudinal/Programmatic Team, as directed by the Board. Assure them that they will be continually updated throughout the process, and tell them how information will be shared.

### Step 2 DESIGN

- a. The Access Audit team must work cooperatively with the Church Board and a building committee. Consult with experts for their recommendations of effectiveness and cost efficiency.
- b. The Attitudinal/Programmatic Team must work cooperatively with the Church Board and other appropriate committees, (e.g., Education, Social Concerns).
- c. Develop a scope of the work. Narrow and prioritize needs.
- d. Estimate cost and develop a timeline.
- e. Develop a financial plan to meet the cost.
- f. Present the findings of both task forces to the Church Board requesting the necessary funding.

### Step 3 IMPLEMENTATION

- a. The Access Audit Team should develop a package in order to conceptualize prices and design.
- b. The Attitudinal/Programmatic Team should plan awareness raising events, including persons with disabilities in all aspects of the planning and implementation.
- c. Finalize financial planning.
- d. Present final scope, actual costs and projected payment plan to Church Board.
- f. Implement plans.
- g. Dedicate final, accessible, church and program.

MATERIAL ADAPTED FROM "ACCESS FOR ALL", UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH, MINNESOTA, ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1984.



# THE ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

**Q. Why should the church conduct an accessibility audit?**

**A. Every church can expect to have one out of four members of its congregation handicapped at some point in their life. As a result of handicapping conditions, some of these members will have to use a wheelchair, a crutch, a cane or other mobility aids such as a walker. Some members will suffer strokes or heart attacks or will have reduced vision or hearing as the result of serious accident or simply as a result of their age. Even pregnancy will temporarily handicap many members of the church each year.**

To better serve all of its members, the church can use this audit to determine if physical barriers within the building are restricting or preventing persons with handicapping conditions from fully participating in its activities. The accessibility audit will help the church to find out where the physical barriers exist and to know what it can do to remove them.

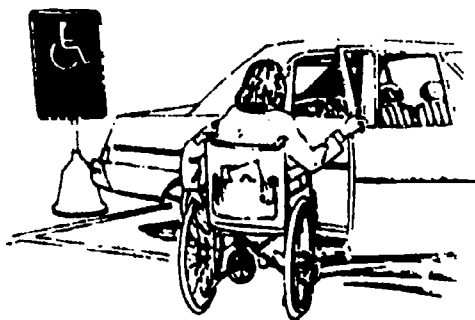
**Q. How should the accessibility audit team members be selected?**

**A. Regardless of the size of the church, audit team members should have one or more of the following qualifications:**

1. They should have an interest in the project.
2. They should include persons with various handicapping conditions as well as persons who have some experience with elderly or handicapped persons. These experienced persons may be a parent of a handicapped child, may work for a social service agency, or may have some other first hand experience with handicapped or elderly persons.
3. They should have some experience with construction. (They may be a contractor, carpenter, architect, engineer, building department inspector or someone skilled at building repair.)
4. They should have some experience with fire and accident prevention (they may be a local volunteer firefighter or a building code inspector).

-HEALTH AND WELFARE MINISTRIES  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

PAM ASSISTANCE CENTRE  
601 West Maple St.  
Lansing, MI 48906



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Lansing, MI  
Permit No. 788

ACQUISITIONS SPECIALIST  
ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE  
1920 ASSOCIATION DR.  
RESTON VA 22091